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LIMITS IN THE SEAS



No. 63

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY:
IRAN - UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES (DUBAI)

This paper is one of a series issued by The Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State. The aim of the series is to set forth the basis for national arrangements for the measurement of the territorial sea or the division of the continental shelf of maritime nations.

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IRAN-UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (DUBAI)

September 30, 1975

The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

The Imperial Government of Iran and the Government of the State of the United Arab Emirates (Dubai) signed an agreement on August 31, 1974, regarding the delimitation of their continental shelf boundary. The agreement was ratified by Iran on March 15, 1975, but it has yet to be ratified by the U.A.E. Neither government is a party to the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf.

The Agreement Concerning the Boundary Line Dividing Parts of the Continental Shelf Between Iran and the United Arab Emirates states that:

The Government of the State of U.A.E. and the Imperial Government of Iran desirous of establishing in a just, equitable and precise manner the boundary line between the respective areas of continental shelf over which they have sovereign rights in accordance with international law.

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The boundary line dividing the continental shelf lying between the territory of U.A.E. on one side and that of Iran on the other side, except in the vicinity of Sirri Island, shall consist of geodetic lines between the following points:

Point 1: 54°05'16" long. East 25°38'13" lat. North to
 Point 2: 54°26'18" long. East 25°39'55" lat. North to
 Point 3: 54°30'25" long. East 25°41'35" lat. North From this point the boundary line coincides with the southern 12-mile limit of the territorial waters of the Sirri Island: to
 Point 4: 54°44'50" long. East 25°47'20" lat. North to
 Point 5: 54°45'07" long. East 25°47'30" lat. North

Article 2

If any single geological Petroleum structure or Petroleum field, or any single geological structure or field of any other mineral deposit extends across the boundary line set out in Article (1) of this Agreement and the part of such structure or field which is situated on one side of that Boundary line could be exploited wholly or in part by directional drilling from the other side of the Boundary line then:

(a) No well shall be drilled on either side of the Boundary line as set out in Article (1) so that any producing section thereof is less than 125 meters from the said Boundary line, except by mutual agreement between the two Governments.

(b) Both Governments shall endeavour to reach agreement as to the manner in which the operations on both sides of the Boundary line could be coordinated or unitized.

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Article 3

The Boundary line referred to in Article (1) herein has been illustrated on the British Admiralty Chart No: 2837 which is annexed to this Agreement.

Article 4

Nothing in this Agreement shall affect the status of the superajacent [sic] waters or airspace above any party of the Continental Shelf.

Article 5

(a) This Agreement shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged atas soon as possible.

(b) This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification.

In witness thereof the undersigned being duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed the present Agreement.

Done in duplicate at Tehran the 24 Rajah 1394 corresponding to the 13 August 1974 in the Arabic, Persian, and English languages, all texts being equally authoritative.

For the State of U.A.E.

For the Imperial Government of Iran

ANALYSIS

The continental shelf boundary between Iran and the U.A.E. was plotted on U.S. Naval Oceanographic Charts 62390 and 62400,

The boundary extends for a distance of 39.25 nautical miles and it has five turning or terminal points. The distances between points 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5 are 19.18 n. miles, 4.60 n. miles, 14.29 n. miles, and 1.18 n. miles respectively. The depth of the water in this area of the Persian Gulf is approximately 30 fathoms (54.9 meters).

The boundary is not based on the equidistance principle; from four of the five turning or terminal points the boundary is nearer to the Irani Island of Sirri than to any U.A.E. territory. From point 3-4 the shelf boundary coincides with Sirri's 12-nautical-mile territorial sea (the .22 n. mile discrepancy found when measuring the territorial sea--refer to the table--may be a result of the particular chart or projection used).

Even though the Dubai Government was the principal emirate involved in this treaty, most of the boundary is closer to the coasts of other emirates. The U.A.E. territory closest to points 1 and 2 is the island of Sir Abu Nu ' ayr which belongs to Sharjah. The island of Abu Musa, closest to points 3, 4, and 5 is currently in dispute between Iran and Sharjah. Disregarding Abu Musa, points 3 and 5 are closest to Sharjah (30.79 and 42.30 n. miles respectively) while point 4 is closest to Dubai (42.48 n. miles). The continental shelf boundary does not coincide with the lateral limits of Dubai's legal continental shelf. The eastward limit of Dubai's legal shelf extends at a 310.5° azimuth from the Abu Hayl Peninsula to approximately the location of point 4 on the Iran-U.A.E. shelf boundary. The westward limit of Dubai's legal shelf extends at a 314.5° azimuth from the coast near Ra 's Hasan to a point approximately 1.9 nautical miles east from point 1 on the Iran-U.A.E. boundary.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IRAN-U.A.E. CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY

Terminal or Turning points	Distance Between Points (n.m.)	Iran Territory	Distance, Land to Boundary Point (n.m.)		U.A.E. Territory
1	19.18	Sirri	27.04	24.70	Sir Abu Nu'ayr (Sharjah)
2	4.60	Sirri	14.29	27.66	Sir Abu Nu'ayr (Sharjah)
3	14.29	Sirri	12.22	30.79 29.00	Sir Abu Nu'ayr (Sharjah) Abu Musa (Disputed)
4	1.18	Sirri	12.22	42.48 14.87	Mainland (Dubai) Abu Musa (Disputed)
5		Sirri	12.34	42.30 14.54	Mainland (Sharjah) Abu Musa (Disputed)



Iran-United Arab Emirates:
Continental Shelf Boundary

○ Terminal or turning point

Source of Data: Office of the Geographer, Department of State

Northern sheet
From N.O. 62390, 3rd Ed., Dec. 30, 1968; Revised 1/22/73

Southern sheet
From N.O. 62400, 4th Ed., Oct. 15, 1973

GLOSSARY

Dungh	bay, inlet
Fash	shoal, reef, bank
Hadd	reef, spit
Yalla	ridge, shoal, sandbank
Jabal	mountain, range, hill
Jazirah	island
Khar	strait, inlet, bay, lake
Rupa	shoal, rock, pearl bank
Ra's	cape, point

COMPILATION DATA
British Admiralty Charts Nos. 3707, 3950, 2837
Miscellaneous Data



ARABIAN PENINSULA
PERSIAN GULF

RA'S AL MATBAKH TO ASH SHARIQAH

From British surveys to 1950
with additions and corrections to 1973

SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS
(Under Eleven in Fathoms and Feet)

HEIGHTS IN FEET ABOVE MEAN HIGHER HIGH WATER

For Symbols and Abbreviations, see Chart No. 1

MERCATOR PROJECTION

DIRECTION AND RATE
OF TIDAL CURRENTS

Hours	Direction	Rate (kts)	Sp. Np.
24°16.5'N 51°47.7'E			
Before H.W.	293°	0.2-0.1	
At H.W.	317°	0.8-0.3	
After H.W.	329°	0.9-0.4	
Before L.W.	335°	1.1-0.5	
At L.W.	329°	1.1-0.5	
After L.W.	335°	0.5-0.3	
Before H.W.	136°	0.2-0.1	
At H.W.	148°	0.8-0.4	
After H.W.	152°	1.1-0.6	
Before L.W.	146°	1.1-0.5	
At L.W.	146°	0.7-0.3	
After L.W.	152°	0.3-0.1	
Before H.W.	260°	0.1-0.0	